GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURISM AND CULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6178
ANSWERED ON:05.05.2003
ILLEGAL SALE OF ARTEFACTS
RAMDAS ATHAWALE

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any enquiry has been conducted into the illegal sale of rare artefacts from the office of the Archaeological Survey of India located in Sunder Nagar and from some other parts of Delhi during March, 2003;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the value of the above mentioned rare artefacts?

Answer

MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN)

(a), (b)& (c) Yes, Sir. No such sale took place from the office of Archaeological Surveyof India which is not located in Sunder Nagar. However, the Central Bureau of Investigation with the assistance of officers of the Archaeological Survey of India conducted a surprise check relating to illegal sale of antiquities and rare artefacts by M/S Bowring`s Fine Art Auctioneers Pvt. Ltd., 69, Sunder Nagar and C-331, Defence Colony, New Delhi on 21.3.2003.During the surprise check, nine paintings of Raja Ravi Verma and one painting of P. Gerhardt, which were meant for auction were seized. Investigation so far has revealed that 65 antique objects were sold, through auctions, for an amount of Rs.2.80 crores approximately. The Central Bureau of Investigation has registered a case on 22.03.2003 against M/s Bowring`s Fine Art Auctioneers Pvt. Ltd. u/s 25(2) read with Section 5 of the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972.